

Deterrence in the Human Domain: A COIN Framework to Deterring Unconventional Warfare in Shaping Operations

A Monograph

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Abstract

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Current adversaries of the United States are typically not willing to engage in a conventional conflict against a US partner nation without first shaping the environment by unconventional military action. This monograph examines how to deter such anticipated unconventional warfare threats, and argues that military activities involving operations to increase the popular will, such as information operations, positioning of forces and resources, and limited conflict, will have a deterrent effect within the human domain. Using the counterinsurgency framework of shape, clear, hold, build, and transition to conduct deterrence during shaping operations, this monograph provides an operational approach for friendly deterrence of an adversary's unconventional threat. To test this framework, this monograph analyzes a case study of how Russia will likely use unconventional forces and information operations to attempt to shape the human domain and legitimize a limited conventional action in Eastern Europe before the United States can react. This study of the contemporary Eastern European situation shows that the shape, clear, hold, build, and transition framework provides a better understanding of how the United States can organize operations to deter unconventional warfare. These operations can include the forward positioning of forces and resources, using IO to build the national will of a partner nation, and enabling limited conflict within the partner nation in the form of policing actions. The monograph concludes by analyzing the benefits and risks to applying the shape, clear, hold, build, and transition framework to UW deterrence.

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Acronyms

ABCT	Armored Brigade Combat Team
APS	Army Prepositioned Stock
COIN	Counterinsurgency
DOD	Department of Defense
ERI	European Reassurance Initiative
FID	Foreign Internal Defense
FM	Field Manual
FY	Fiscal Year
HN	Host Nation
IO	Information Operations
IW	Irregular Warfare
JIACG	Joint Interagency Coordination Group
JP	Joint Publication
NATO	North Atlantic Treaty Organization
NDAA	National Defense Authorization Act
OAR	Operation Atlantic Resolve
OE	Operational Environment
PN	Partner Nation
RAF	Regionally Aligned Force
SCHBT	Shape, Clear, Hold, Build, Transition
SOF	Special Operations Forces
SPP	State Partnership Program
USASOC	United States Army Special Operations Command
USEUCOM	United States European Command
UW	Unconventional Warfare
WMD	Weapons of Mass Destruction

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Introduction

As typically defined, deterrence implies or directly threatens the use of force on an adversary to prevent conflict. This concept of deterrence may be adequate when facing a conventional threat in a conventional form of warfare. However, the current adversaries of the United States are typically not willing to face off in a conventional showdown without first shaping the environment by means other than conventional military action. In particular, as a potential adversary, Russia will likely use unconventional forces and information operations to shape the human domain in ways that would let it wage a limited conventional action in Eastern Europe before the United States has time to react. Adversaries such as Russia may also seek to legitimize any conventional actions through the use of unconventional and information shaping operations, further restricting US counteractions. In order to protect the nation's global interests and norms, the US military must reevaluate the concept of deterrence. It must be brought out of the Cold War concept defined by nuclear deterrence, and go beyond the limited conflict concept defined by the threat of conventional force, in order to better counter the threats faced today.

The United States currently conducts conventional military deterrence activities in Europe to prevent Russian actions. By conducting exercises and demonstrations of conventional capabilities in Europe with European partners, the United States hopes to deter Russian aggression in Eastern Europe and in the NATO Baltic States.¹ Additionally, the Baltic States are preparing themselves for resistance operations in the event of a successful Russian invasion.² After previously removing its armored forces from Europe, the United States has reevaluated the costs and benefits

¹ US European Command, "Operation Atlantic Resolve: Fact Sheet, 2016," April 15, 2016, 2.

² Andrew E. Kramer, "Spooked by Russia, Tiny Estonia Trains a Nation of Insurgents," *New York Times*, October 31, 2016, accessed December 13, 2016, <https://mobile.nytimes.com/2016/11/01/world/europe/spooked-by-russia-tiny-estonia-trains-a-nation-of-insurgents.html?smprod=nytcore-ipad&smid=nytcore-ipad-share&referrer=https%3A%2F%2Ft.co%2FyzULt1iDzO>.

of maintaining such a force in Europe as a conventional deterrent to a Russian conventional military threat by beginning a continual rotation of Armored Brigade Combat Teams to the continent.³ All of these measures focus on deterring conventional Russian military threats, but measures to deter unconventional Russian threats have not received as much attention. Therefore, this monograph focuses on possible ways to deter the anticipated unconventional threat that often precedes conventional armed conflict.

Potential adversaries today understand the threat or possibility of counteractions to conventional approaches, and thus are more likely to adopt an unconventional approach that precedes their conventional operations, or if possible, achieve their objectives outright. How to deter this unconventional approach is the subject of this monograph. This monograph argues that there are ways to deter the unconventional threat preceding conventional conflict, both through actions that the US military is currently undertaking, and actions that it could take in the future. An analysis of contemporary conflicts offers possible activities for both influencing and countering the unconventional threat. These options include: operations to increase the popular will such as information operations (IO), positioning of forces and resources, and limited conflict. Integrating these practices into current US military and allied operations may help to better deter future adversarial unconventional shaping against US national interests.

In order to understand how such deterrence could work, this monograph studies the adversary's unconventional warfare (UW) actions that occur before an outbreak of conventional or hybrid war; in other words, the adversary's shaping operations. Joint Publication (JP) 3-0, *Joint Operations*, describes shaping operations as missions, tasks, and actions that "help identify, deter, counter, or mitigate competitor and adversary actions that challenge country and regional stability" and "improve perceptions and influence adversaries' and allies' behavior,... and positively affect

³ US European Command, "Operation Atlantic Resolve," 2.

conditions that could lead to a crisis.”⁴ This monograph argues for an approach using the counterinsurgency (COIN) framework of “shape, clear, hold, build, and transition” (SCHBT) to conduct shaping deterrence operations, providing a way to frame the deterrence of the adversary’s unconventional approach. This monograph considers efforts to deter by shaping the population’s preference against joining unconventional forces prior to conventional conflicts to be deterrence within the human domain.

In the following sections, this monograph orients the reader to the origins and development of the contemporary understanding of deterrence and its necessary assumptions. Next, it offers an explanation of unconventional warfare, and its goals for fracturing a state in order to allow conquest. This monograph then describes the human domain, and connects deterrence theory’s decision making processes to the human domain, where unconventional deterrence is applied and achieved. This new application of deterrence theory in the human domain focuses on targeting a population within a state, and not an adversary state or its leaders. This leads into a discussion of US military doctrine regarding shaping and deterrence planning, and where and how the deterrence of unconventional warfare can fit into current planning models. Next, this monograph discusses ways of deterring unconventional warfare, and proposes that deterrence can be achieved using a “shape, clear, hold, build, and transition” framework. The monograph then reviews Russian UW and applies the SCHBT framework against Russian influence and potential UW as a deterrence framework in the Baltic States.

Deterrence

Deterrence is intended to display or communicate the capability of an immediate credible response or threat to an expected adversary’s actions, forcing the adversary to weigh the costs and

⁴ Joint Publication (JP) 3-0, *Joint Operations* (Washington, DC: Government Printing Office, 2017), V-9.

benefits of those actions. JP 3-0 defines deterrence as “the prevention of adversary action through the presentation of credible threat of unacceptable counteraction and belief that the cost of the action outweighs the perceived benefits.”⁵ The concept assumes that the adversary is a rational actor, who understands the threat proposed and can weigh the costs of US counteractions to anticipated benefits gained through conflict. While the willingness to use force remained constant as the concept of deterrence developed, the means and audience have changed over time.

Throughout history deterrence was known as coercive diplomacy, and characterized by latent violence, or the possession of power to hurt your adversary in order to influence their choices.⁶ Deterrence in its contemporary understanding addresses enemy capabilities and is largely a result of the Cold War. Modern deterrence originated from the use of early airpower, when air raid retaliation was the only method of preventing air raids against one’s own country, due to the bomber’s perceived invulnerability.⁷ This airpower-linked concept implied that one must maintain a large enough force to survive the initial raid and still significantly damage the adversary’s air force, resulting in a large buildup of resources on both sides, creating the threat of force rather than the use of it. The deterrence concept metastasized and became a strategic framework with the advent and introduction of nuclear weapons and the ability for nations to use these weapons anywhere in the world via ballistic missiles. The threat of the use of force to prevent adversary actions reached its zenith in the Cuban missile crisis, when Soviet forces withdrew nuclear missiles from Cuba under threat of US nuclear action.⁸

From its origins as a form of foreign policy, deterrence ushered in a focus on nuclear retaliation during the post-World War II (WWII) era, and is currently changing again, following a

⁵ Ibid., VI-4.

⁶ Thomas C. Schelling, *Arms and Influence* (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 1966), 2-3.

⁷ Lawrence Freedman, *Deterrence* (Cambridge, UK: Polity Press, 2004), 9.

⁸ Ibid., 12; Lawrence Freedman, *Strategy: A History* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2013), 159-77.

shift to the information age and post-September 11, 2001, world. In a bi-polar superpower world, deterrence turned from foreign policy manipulation into a straightforward demonstration of capability and the credible will to use it. During this time, the territorial expansion of great powers generally ceased, but their expansion of influence continued. The use of third-party states to create ambiguity and mask the nuclear powers' actions became paramount in unconventional warfare. For example, the United States used Pakistan to train and equip mujahedeen forces in Afghanistan in the 1980s against the Soviets rather than training and equipping them directly. The September 11, 2001, terrorist attacks brought non-state organizations into the spotlight. Following the collapse of the Soviet Union a decade earlier, non-state organizations, along with globalization, and widespread access to information changed the global operating environment. Western security concerns changed from one of deterrence and retaliation to one of preemption of rogue elements acquiring weapons of mass destruction.⁹ Within this changing environment, the focus of deterrence against state actors shifted to a new focus on compelling non-state or sub-state actors. The difference between deterrence and compellence is that deterring prevents action in order to maintain the status quo while compellence creates action to favorably change the status quo. Both actions are directed against the opponent's will, but compellence is more difficult to achieve and then manage.¹⁰ The US shift, from preventative measures to stabilize the status quo, to prescriptive attempts to shape the environment, has proven to be a burdensome and drawn out process against state and non-state organizations in both Afghanistan and Iraq. The recent aggression of Russia, flouting international norms, has again brought deterrence as a strategy to the forefront. Russia's sidestepping and undermining of conventional deterrence through unconventional actions requires an expansive understanding of deterrence in order to address the Kremlin's intent to use this approach. The

⁹ Freedman, *Deterrence*, 84; Jeffrey W. Knopf, *The Fourth Wave in Deterrence Research* (Monterey, CA: Calhoun Institutional Archive of the Naval Post Graduate School, 2010), 3.

¹⁰ Freedman, *Deterrence*, 110.

concept of deterrence, historically defined by its nuclear and conventional means, must now also include the ability to compel a partner nation's populace within the contemporary operational environment in order to deter an ambiguous unconventional threat.

This monograph makes a critical assumption that war between nuclear powers, such as the United States and Russia, will not escalate into total nuclear war. This assumption is based on the presumption that war between nuclear powers will not be made within either's national boundaries, but within a third-party nation's territory, which becomes the focus of the dispute between the greater powers. It assumes that the third-party nation is a security partner of the United States that would allow the United States to involve itself in conventional deterrence and deterrence of UW in cooperation with the third-party nation (here on referred to as the partner nation (PN)). This is based on the concept of Antagonistic Geopolitical Balancing that presumes "conflict is likely to occur as powerful and ambitious adversaries actively work to maximize their own influence while excluding or limiting the US influence."¹¹ To make war within the national boundary of a nuclear adversary tempts nuclear escalation in self-defense. While this is not an impossible scenario, it is more likely that nuclear powers will enter into conflict with each other via a third party.

In addition to the assumptions described above, four critical assumptions for deterrence theory that remain true for unconventional deterrence are:

1. The actions to be deterred result from deliberate decisions to act, not from automatic responses, or unintended or accidental events.
2. Adversary decisions to act are based on calculations regarding alternative courses of action and perceptions of the values and probabilities of alternative outcomes associated with those courses of action.

¹¹ US Joint Chiefs of Staff, *Joint Operating Environment (JOE) 2035: The Joint Force in a Contested and Disordered World* (Washington, DC: US Department of Defense, 2016), 27.

3. Adversary values and perceptions relevant to decision making can be sufficiently identified, assessed, and influenced through action (or inaction) by others.
4. Adversary decision makers are rational; that is, they calculate and develop and implement strategies to reach objectives, though they often take actions that seem unreasonable to observers viewing them from their own value structure.¹²

In sum, deterrence has gone through many forms in history, but throughout has emphasized a willing capability to use force in order to manipulate an adversary's decisions. Pre-WWII, threat of the use of force concerning conventional forces characterized deterrence. The opening of the air domain and the introduction of nuclear weapons changed the character of deterrence to retaliatory capability. In a globalized post-Cold War world, conflict between great powers is less likely but the pursuit to expand each's influence within third-party states continues. Now the threat of force must address a population within a partner nation as well as an adversary's leaders.

Unconventional Warfare

Conventional deterrence in recent history has limited large-scale war between superpowers, and led states who wish to undermine classic forms of deterrence into using unconventional warfare. Such UW, conducted before declared conventional conflict, influences the population for the purpose of shaping the operational environment (OE) for later exploitation. In order to understand how UW is used to combat deterrence, this section first defines UW, and then discusses the implications of using it.

Unconventional warfare is an activity within irregular warfare (IW).¹³ JP 1-02 defines IW as “a violent struggle among state and non-state actors for legitimacy and influence over the

¹² Jonathan Trexel, “Concepts for Deterrence Operations,” in *NATO and 21st Century Deterrence*, ed. Karl-Heinz Kamp and David S. Yost (Rome: NATO Defense College, 2009), 200-1.

¹³ Field Manual (FM) 3-05.130, *Army Special Operations Forces Unconventional Warfare* (Washington, DC: Government Printing Office, 2008), 1-2.

relevant populations. IW favors indirect and asymmetric approaches, though it may employ the full range of military and other capacities in order to erode an adversary's power, influence, and will.”¹⁴ Other activities that fall within irregular warfare include: insurgency, counterinsurgency (COIN), terrorism, counter-terrorism, foreign internal defense (FID), stability, security, transition, and reconstruction operations, strategic communication, psychological operations, civil-military operations, information operations (IO), intelligence and counterintelligence activities, transnational criminal activities, and law enforcement activities focused on countering irregular adversaries.¹⁵

Unconventional warfare consists of activities to “enable a resistance movement or insurgency to coerce, disrupt, or overthrow a government or occupying power by operating through or with an underground, auxiliary, and guerilla force in a denied area.”¹⁶ Unconventional warfare does not always equal “overthrow” but is a combination of direct and indirect applications of national power to leverage groups opposed to the governing authority to act in support of the sponsoring state's objectives.¹⁷ Prerequisites for unconventional warfare are: alignment or tangential alignment of opposition groups with national interests, and that group's willingness to partner with a state sponsor, as well as vulnerability in government legitimacy, assets, infrastructure and ability to control the population and territory.¹⁸

The unconventional actions that occur prior to conflict and shape the battlefield can be executed by state or non-state actors, or both, in order to serve the purposes of an adversary. This monograph identifies state-backed unconventional forces as those forces that may or may not wear

¹⁴ Joint Publication (JP) 1-02, *Department of Defense Dictionary of Military and Associated Terms* (Washington, DC: Government Printing Office, 2001; amended 2010), 486.

¹⁵ FM 3-05.130, 1-5.

¹⁶ Joint Publication (JP) 3-05, *Special Operations* (Washington, DC: Government Printing Office, 2014), GL-12.

¹⁷ Army Techniques Publication (ATP) 3-05.1C1, *Unconventional Warfare* (Washington, DC: Government Printing Office, 2015), 1-2.

¹⁸ *Ibid.*, 1-2 – 1-3.

national colors and who seek to achieve or set conditions for conventional forces to achieve strategic and operational objectives. Similarly, non-state unconventional forces are organizations that seeks to disrupt or prevent governmental or military action and have significant influence in the population. Non-state organizations may or may not have funding from an adversarial state, but similarly seek to fracture state control and perception of security in order to advance their agenda. Non-state organizations include violent extremist organizations and transnational criminal organizations that a state adversary utilizes or capitalizes on. State-sponsored unconventional activities require military actors—though they may be acting covertly—and implies a more immediate follow-on action by political or conventional armed forces. Non-state unconventional actors, on the other hand, may be perceived as criminal activity or an interested non-state organization that has ties with or history of cooperation with the adversarial state sponsor. They offer a level of ambiguity or deniability and longer timeline for intervention. It may also be a non-state organization or movement unprovoked by the antagonist that is taken advantage of.¹⁹

Most nations possess groups opposed to government authority, but their popular recognition, support by the larger target population, or outside state sponsorship may not exist. To be successful, opposition groups almost always need assistance from an external power.²⁰ Unconventional forces backing an opposition group may target the population at large in order to fracture state control and the perception of security, allowing the adversary group to increase in influence and gain momentum. They may also directly enable and work with the adversary group to achieve objectives.²¹

¹⁹ This body of work aims to address the actions of both non-state and state actors in unconventional roles used as shaping efforts by an adversary prior to armed conflict, and will not discuss revolutionary movements and state formation that are insulated from outside support.

²⁰ Carl Schmitt, *Theory of the Partisan* (New York: Telos Press Publishing, 1975), 74.

²¹ ATP 3-05.1C1, 1-1.

This monograph argues that there are measures that partner nations and friendly forces can take in order to limit or deter the activity and adversarial support of such opposition groups. First, opposition groups seeking external state sponsorship can be a target for internal policing actions, or the target of limited strike operations. Second, positioning forces and resources at anticipated UW physical objectives restricts UW movements and opportunities. Third, the will of the populace can be built up to such a degree that the internal opposition group never achieves legitimacy in the eyes of the population and therefore working with the group becomes undesirable to adversarial unconventional forces.

Whether using state or non-state forces, an antagonist seeks to achieve objectives within an OE that circumvents and undermines conventional deterrence prior to committing to conventional conflict. UW achieves these objectives by fracturing state control, or alliances, through the exploitation of local opposition groups. UW's use of the population places it in a domain that affects all others—one that makes deterrence more than the credible use of force, but requires the development of national will.

Deterrence in the Human Domain

Traditionally, deterrence is not considered or initiated until after identifying the adversary's shaping efforts or a crisis is defined.²² Adversary shaping efforts are those operations prior to or during conventional conflict intended to coerce populations and leaders to make decisions that lead to favorable conditions for armed conflict. For example, without unconventional forces and information operations influencing the population in Crimea, Russia would not have been able to create disunion on the peninsula and occupy it as quickly as it did, after Crimea's declaration of independence from Ukraine.²³ Similarly, with Eastern Ukraine, to shape the environment a

²² JP 3-0, V-9.

²³ Keir Giles, *Russia's "New" Tools for Confronting the West: Continuity and Innovation in Moscow's Exercise of Power* (London: Chatham House, March 2016), 30-31; Mary Ellen Connell and Ryan

collection of unconventional forces took control of government institutions and key infrastructure, but failed to rally the popular support seen in Crimea, escalating the situation to conventional conflict and Russian intervention.²⁴

Like shaping, deterrence focuses on decision making, historically of an adversarial political or military leader. Deterrence aims to prevent rival leaders at various levels from making a decision that leads to armed conflict, or to influence them to make a decision favorable to one's own side. To deter adversarial shaping operations is to deny adversarial influence on target populations by influencing the decision making of the population prior to the onset of UW. This monograph defines such a population-centered focus as deterrence in the human domain. The human domain focuses on people (individuals, groups, and populations) in terms of their perceptions, decision-making, and behavior and is therefore tied to the other domains: land, sea, air, space and cyber.²⁵ While the main idea of deterrence, affecting adversary decision making, remains the same as in previous literature, the concept of deterrence in the human domain calls for an indirect approach by directly targeting the decisions of a population.

Identifying and measuring successful deterrence by proving a negative is difficult. In the height of the cold war, deterrence became a national strategy of communist containment and relied on anticipating aggression and guarding against being surprised, and success resulted in sustainment of the status quo.²⁶ In an attempt to identify successful deterrence measures before committing to action, the US Naval War College developed a method of assessing deterrence by measuring escalation and resolve as drivers of deterrence decisions in wargaming; breaking down

Evans, *Russia's "Ambiguous Warfare" and Implications for the USMC* (Arlington, VA: Center for Naval Analyses, May 2015), 9-10.

²⁴ Connell and Evans, 10.

²⁵ US Army Special Operations Command, "SOF Support to Political Warfare," white paper, March 10, 2015, 25.

²⁶ Freedman, *Deterrence*, 11.

resolve further into components of stakes, credible capabilities, and risk tolerance in order to explain motivations that drive escalation decisions.²⁷ To anticipate adversary decisions requires an understanding of their objectives and interests, and willingness to use force. To anticipate the decision making of a population is much harder and requires an understanding of physical, historical, cultural and social factors.

This monograph identifies successful deterrence of UW in two ways: first, the retention or increase in popular support to a friendly nation despite adversary information operations and unconventional attempts, and second, through the anticipated escalation decisions the adversary makes regarding their military and the resolve of their foreign policy. Adversarial information operations are one indicator of popular support; if those operations are reactionary to friendly IO, this implies that friendly forces have the initiative in this area and may be successfully influencing the human domain. Another measure of popular support is the probability that a certain event or class of events, such as PN opposition groups seeking adversarial UW support, will not occur within a defined area in a given period of time.²⁸ Escalation with the adversary is not a large concern or necessarily avoided, as such escalation may be advantageous if it limits adversarial control over a population. In a conflict that quickly transitions from an unconventional to a conventional fight, the adversary's influence with the population may not have time to be realized and legitimized via unconventional operations. Such a lack of population support, combined with the predominance of US overmatch in conventional military capacity, means that a conventional conflict may actually signal the defeat or deterrence of the more dangerous unconventional threat. Additionally, it better allows the US military to transition stability operations to the PN following conflict resolution.

²⁷ Douglas R. Ducharme, "Measuring Strategic Deterrence: A Wargaming Approach," *Joint Forces Quarterly* 82 (3rd Quarter, 2016): 45.

²⁸ Stathis N. Kalyvas, *The Logic of Violence in Civil War* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2006), 210.

When attempting to deter unconventional state and non-state actions, the central ideas of conventional deterrence apply: deny benefits, impose costs, and encourage adversary restraint.²⁹ The human domain becomes important in deterring UW because a key objective of unconventional forces is vulnerable populations. In order to influence the decision making of an adversarial leader, a population becomes a target for friendly information operations and influence. Conditioning the social and national identity of that population to be strong enough to withstand adversarial propaganda or influence is key to building a national will that denies an unconventional force the benefits of using a domestic population to shape the operational environment. In addition to IO that communicate the credible threat, the positioning of forces also weighs on the adversarial use of unconventional forces by presenting an increased capability to follow through on the threat. When advantageously positioning friendly forces, an adversarial unconventional force is denied the benefits of possessing physical objectives, such as government buildings or critical infrastructure, while risking the cost of escalating conflict or a loss of legitimacy if they must fight to possess them. Credible threats of escalation or punishment may force the adversary to stop activities, or face involvement in a conventional conflict it is unprepared for or cannot win. Constructing a message that captures a nation's readiness to either escalate to limited conflict, or punish unconventional activity, can encourage restraint in adversaries who might otherwise choose to undertake such activity. Conducting national active and passive defenses achieves limited unconventional deterrence effects, but should include targeted information operations, and escalation to limited conflict when necessary.

Deterrence in shaping operations prior to armed conflict not only influences national leaders, but takes place in the human domain. The human domain then becomes the area of focus to influence decision making of a population and the measure of its will indicates the ability to deter

²⁹ US Department of Defense, "Deterrence Operations," Joint Operating Concept, Version 2.0, December 2006, 5.

adversary UW. The human domain consists of the physical, cultural, and social environmental factors influenced by the other domains, and contains objectives to defeat an opponent's will to resist.³⁰ When not accounted for, the human domain accounts for the failure of overwhelming military might in the land, air, sea, space, and cyber domains to achieve strategic objectives.³¹ Deterrence in the human domain, characterized by shaping a population, denies the unconventional threat that occurs prior to conventional armed conflict and enhances security and stability.³² Those operations should seek to create and maintain a superior value of the partner nation to the population which builds the will and maintains the status quo, the aims of deterrence. However, value is relative compared to the competition in the mind of the people, and requires a nation to generate a proposition that is superior to an adversary's offer.³³ An offering's value is determined by the fit between its attributes and the needs of the target population, creating value within three dimensions: functional value, monetary value, and psychological value.³⁴ In order to shape an environment to deter unconventional actions, the military must identify specific or vulnerable populations for targeted information operations and provide resources that deliver a superior value proposition and creates a competitive advantage in relation the adversary.

In sum, the human domain plays an essential role in deterring an adversary's UW. Conducting information operations and, if necessary, limited conflict operations, as well as advantageous positioning of forces represent deterrence measures aimed directly at the adversary

³⁰ Raymond T. Odierno, James F. Amos, and William H. McRaven, "Strategic Landpower: Winning the Clash of Wills," white paper, 2013, 2.

³¹ Robert L. Cornelius, "An Evaluation of the Human Domain Concept: Organizing the Knowledge, Influence, and Activity in Population Centric Warfare" (monograph, School of Advanced Military Studies, US Army Command and General Staff College, 2015), 2.

³² Odierno, Amos, and McRaven, 6.

³³ Alexander Chernev, *Strategic Marketing Management*, 7th ed. (Chicago: Cerebellum Press, 2012), 37.

³⁴ Ibid., 37-38. "Functional value is defined by the benefits and costs directly related to an offering's performance. Monetary value is defined by the monetary benefits and costs associated with the offering. Psychological value is defined by the psychological benefits and costs associated with the offering."

decision maker. Shaping the population's decision making in favor of the PN deters the adversary's use of UW. Deterrence in the human domain denies the adversarial unconventional forces the ability to undermine conventional deterrence and legitimize future hostilities.

Shaping and Deterrence Phasing

Shaping and deterring have a symbiotic relationship, and both are proactive and reactive. JP 3-0 divides the two activities into separate phases of operational planning (Phase-0 Shape and Phase-I Deter), but acknowledges that deterrence activities occur in both. The recently updated JP 3-0 addresses the common misconception that shaping activities assume peace, a lack of conflict, and a failure to address root problems of conflicts that impact the human domain, focusing largely on government-to-government relations or shaping military operational conditions.³⁵ Shaping is more than a state of peace in which Phase-0 of an operational plan is defined by setting conditions for future combat operations. Rather, it is a fluid state in which the OE continually changes, requiring deliberate planning and actions to shape it in order to prevent conflict. Shaping can be seen as a form of deterrence when considering the unconventional threat, and can include operations that involve conflict.

As defined in doctrine, the shape phase is proactive in that its intent is to deter or dissuade adversaries and influence their behavior prior to conflict, and the deter phase is reactionary and only implemented once crisis is identified and defined.³⁶ The deterrence activities within the shape phase are not limited to influencing the behavior of the adversary, but more importantly focus on shaping the population and keeping the day-to-day tensions between nations and groups below the threshold of armed conflict.³⁷ The doctrinal purpose of dividing the shaping and deterring into

³⁵ Thomas R. Matelski, *Strategic Insights: Un-“Steady” State Operations: Redefining the Approach to Phase Zero in a Complex World* (Carlisle Barracks, PA: US Army War College Press, 2016), 2.

³⁶ JP 3-0, V-9, V-10.

³⁷ *Ibid.*, V-4, V-6.

separate phases is to mark a point in time which deterrence moves from a proactive focus on shaping the population to a reactive focus on making direct in threats proposed to adversary actions. The recently updated JP 3-0 recognizes deterrence as an effect of shaping activities to maintain stability that becomes focused on operational shaping and deterrence when the threat or crisis is defined.³⁸ This is where the threat of imposed costs if conflict is initiated is specifically oriented on conventional action. This monograph argues that these proactive shaping actions are considered deterrence because they deny potential UW operations the benefits of a vulnerable population or physical objectives. Adversary unconventional forces must react to these activities in an effort to shape the OE for their purposes, resulting in reactive and proactive friendly and adversarial shaping and deterrence, until such activities advance to the development and activation of a combat operation. Figure 1 illustrates the dynamic of theater shaping by adding a sine wave of these deterrence and shaping activities occurring while operation shaping activities sets conditions for conventional operations, and the break at the conflict threshold upon which conventional deterrence commences.

³⁸ Ibid., V-9.

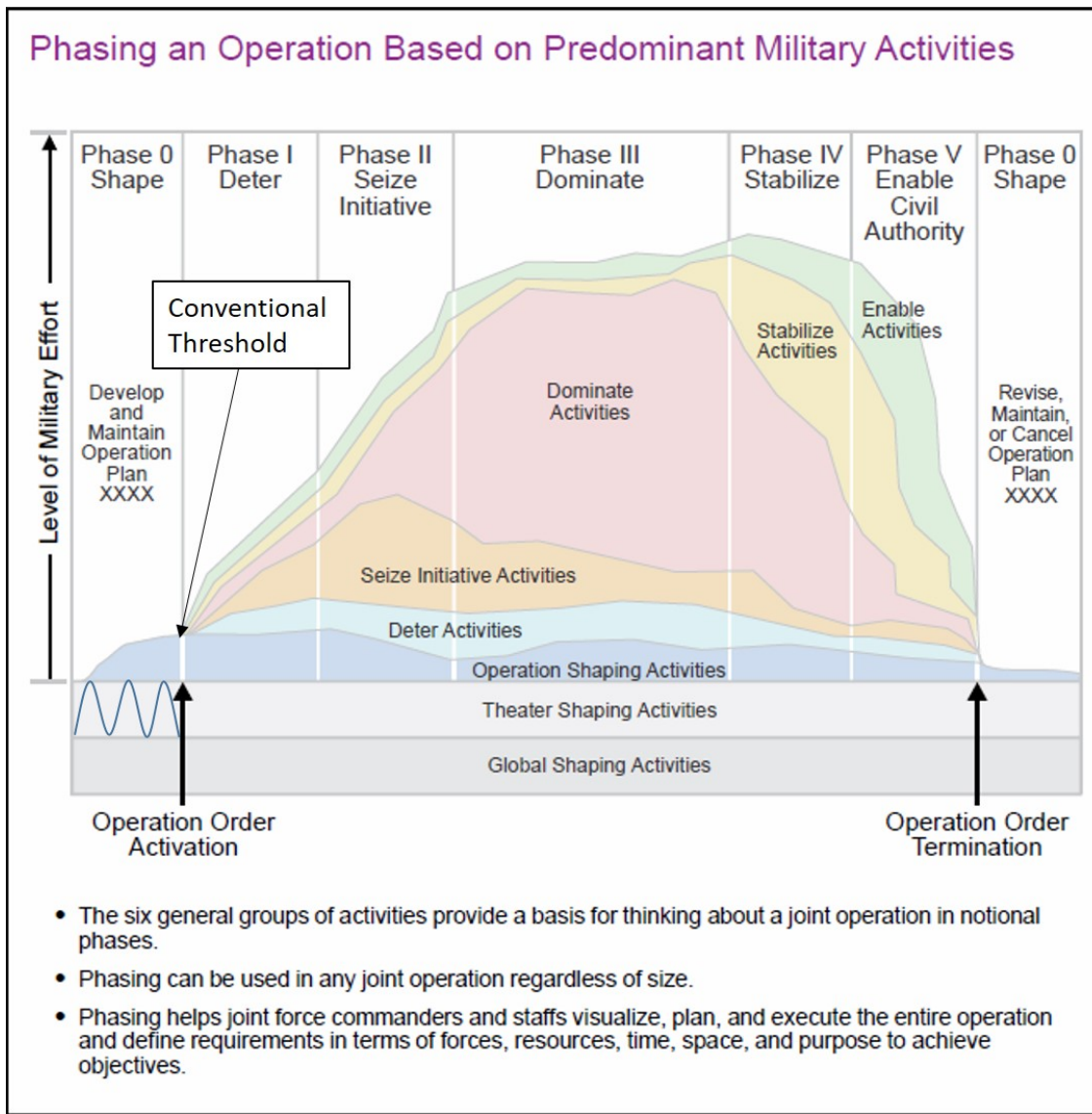


Figure 1. Notional Operation Plan Phasing. Joint Publication (JP) 3-0, *Joint Operations* (Washington, DC: Government Printing Office, 2017), V-13; modified by author.

Deterring unconventional operations prior to armed conflict requires an understanding of what armed conflict is, and where that line is drawn. In conventional conflict, determining the line is straightforward, as deterrence fails when the adversary has decided that the benefit of taking action outweighs the cost proposed, initiating the reaction of armed conflict and thus a change to Phase-2 Seize the Initiative activities. Unconventional shaping and deterrence operations that take part in the theater shaping activities considered “pre-conflict” can however include the use of limited armed conflict, as described by the types of military operations characterized in the “low

end” range of military operations, Military Engagement, Security Cooperation, and Deterrence. Figure 2 shows the range of military operations, and Figure 3 provides a listing of the operations and activities that occur at the in the low end of the range of military operations prior to conventional conflict, with those that allow for armed conflict starred. These graphics suggest that the line that defines armed conflict is not relevant when deterring or countering unconventional operations that are part of the larger theater shaping and deterrence operations.

US fears of conventional escalation typically dictate the manner in which these low level operations are executed. However, they may be pertinent in deterring subversive efforts as part of adversarial contemporary shaping operations. If executed, considerations must include what may trigger conventional armed conflict. Therefore, the shaping operations to deter UW require a framework for execution that establishes legitimacy, removes opposition or unconventional forces, and builds national will. Figure 4 shows a depiction of an environment “pre-conflict” and what activities the military can conduct with partners as part of larger government efforts to prevent, deter, or turn back escalatory activity by the adversary.³⁹

JP 3-0 acknowledges the idea of conducting limited operations for the specific purpose of compelling or deterring adversary action.⁴⁰ Making the use of unconventional forces untenable because of the PN capability to interdict unconventional forces, in addition to the will or resiliency within the population to resist them, can achieve such deterrence. In order to effectively use shaping activities, a strong partnership with the PN is required, as is a better understanding of root problems, and a coordinated and synchronized effort across all government agencies to counter and discredit maligned non-state and state actors.⁴¹

³⁹ Ibid., VI-2.

⁴⁰ Ibid., V-7.

⁴¹ SOCOM J9, “Gray Zone,” *Journal of Asymmetric Warfare* 1, no. 2 (August 2016): 47.



Figure 2. Range of Military Operations. Joint Publication (JP) 3-0, *Joint Operations* (Washington, DC: Government Printing Office, 2017), V-4.



Figure 3. Typical Operations and Activities of Military Engagement, Security Cooperation, and Deterrence. Source: Author.

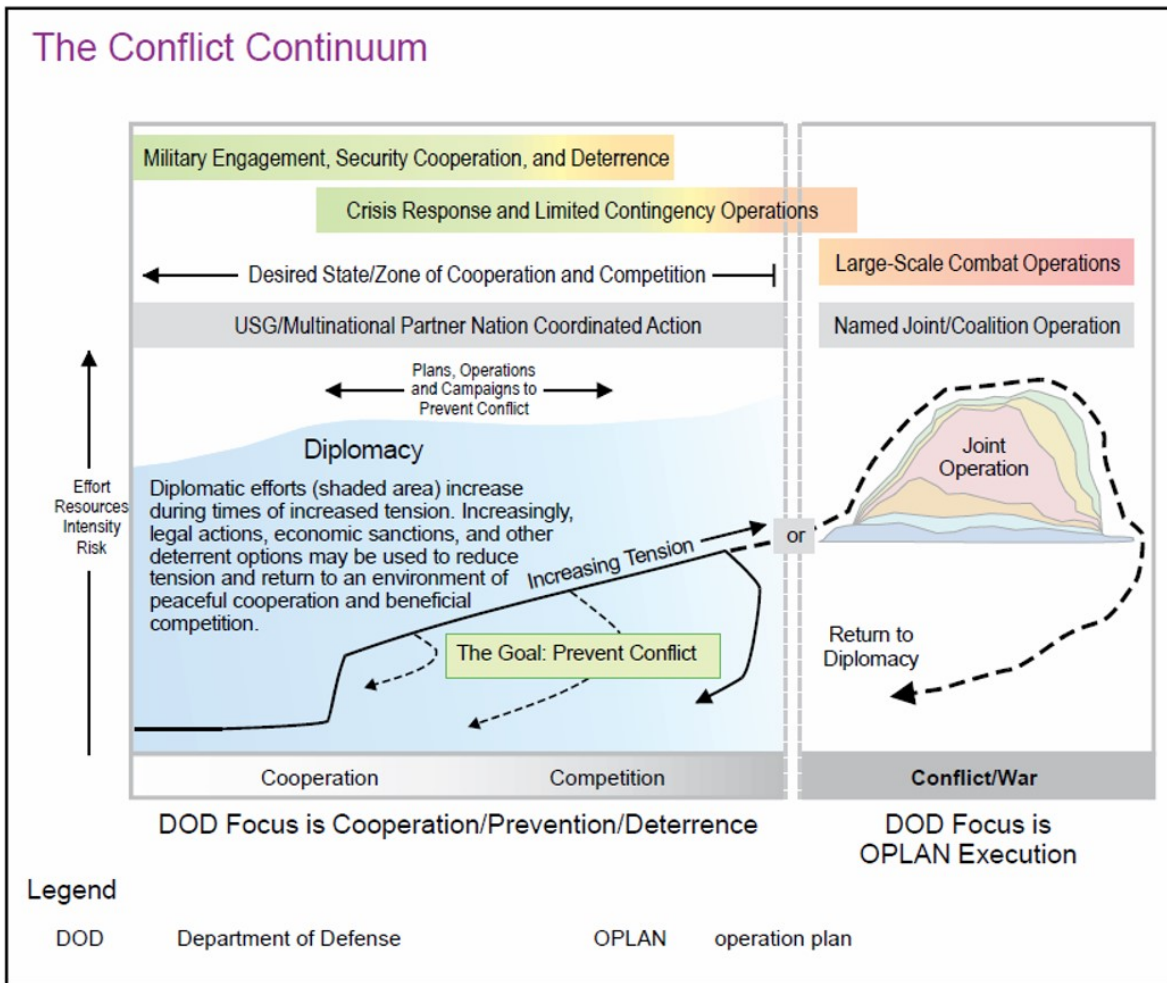


Figure 4. The Conflict Continuum. Joint Publication (JP) 3-0, *Joint Operations* (Washington, DC: Government Printing Office, 2017), VI-2.

Ways to Deter Unconventional Warfare

Little to no literature exists regarding the deterrence of the unconventional approach to warfare. However, deterrence, countering non-state actors, counterinsurgency, and unconventional warfare literature each separately contain elements and ideas that this monograph draws from in order to build an approach to the deterrence of UW. Research into these subjects reveals that a forward military presence, limited conflict, and the building of will or resiliency of the HN population through the positioning forces, and IO present credible actions for deterring the unconventional threat.

To defeat and even prevent an irregular threat from growing among a target population, the military interaction with the populace is critical. In addition to being a conventional deterrent, forward positioned forces (US or PN) among the people can create a stronger bond to a nation and do more for the legitimacy of a government than national government programs targeted at the people.⁴² Forward positioning of friendly forces among the population denies unconventional forces access to physical objectives, and also denies access to vulnerable populations that an adversary's unconventional forces could otherwise infiltrate or influence. Forces that operate among, and have a relationship with, the people decreases the ability of adversarial forces to influence or fracture national alliances. Decreasing the vulnerability of a population correlates to an increase in the deterrent effect.⁴³

Timing is critical because there is a tipping point at which a state begins to lose influence over the population. The failure to promote a governance authority among the populace of a nation within a reasonable timeframe is the normal Achilles' heel in combating IW.⁴⁴ Failure to recognize and influence the population, especially opposing groups or vulnerable populations, before the introduction of outside support or influence can result in adversary legitimacy and UW. A forward military presence not only denies objectives, but builds the will of the people by being a part of a whole of government approach, working with governments to address root causes of instability.

Forward forces provide the opportunity to act quickly to interdict or influence adversary unconventional forces through direct military action outside of conventional operations before they can achieve a foothold. A US Army Special Operations Command white paper states that Counter-

⁴² Christian Jeppson, Sampsa Heilala, Jan Weuts, and Giovanni Santo Arrigo, "NATO's Approach to Irregular Warfare: Protecting the Achilles' Heel," *Military Review* 95, no. 5 (September-October 2015): 30-31.

⁴³ R. Reed Anderson et al., *Strategic Landpower and a Resurgent Russia: An Operational Approach to Deterrence* (Carlisle Barracks, PA: US Army War College Press, 2016), 55.

⁴⁴ Jeppson et al., 28.

Unconventional Warfare may include UW, FID, COIN, stability operations, and counterterrorism.⁴⁵ Labeling this strategy as “counter” implies a reaction to adversarial actions, and works to legitimize US military actions as a response. Perhaps most importantly, the white paper appears to make the assumption that the United States cannot get ahead of unconventional activity, but instead can only counter it after the fact. Yet, conducting these shaping operations as part of an effort to deter UW presents the opportunity to have the initiative in the human domain.

This is not to say that it is possible to eliminate all national opposition prior to conflict when they act within the law. It is impossible to completely root out discontent among a population by the state and therefore, there will always be an organization that looks to counter the state, but they can be contained and deterred from seeking UW support or unconventional forces can be deterred from reaching out to them.⁴⁶ Such leaders’ actions remain largely legal and non-violent, and to realize their objectives they require, use, or seek outside support.⁴⁷ Deterrence then becomes operations that maintain a “dynamic equilibrium” between a state and its opposition or unconventional adversaries.⁴⁸ US FID and COIN operations allow for direct military action against unconventional forces or opposition groups that cross a PN’s legal threshold. COIN operations can act directly on latent insurgent leaders, as well as infiltrating movements to try to make them ineffective.⁴⁹ Conducting FID missions, the US military can extend the law enforcement infrastructure of a friendly nation to enable them to conduct operations against UW or opposition

⁴⁵ US Army Special Operations Command, “Counter-Unconventional Warfare,” white paper, September 26, 2015, 22.

⁴⁶ Freedman, *Deterrence*, 66. Freedman agrees that it is impossible to root out or catch all criminal offenders, but that deterrence should prevent possible offenders from attempting to try.

⁴⁷ David Galula, *Counterinsurgency Warfare* (New York: Praeger, 1968), 39, 63.

⁴⁸ Mark Vinson, “An Israeli Approach to Deterring Terrorism: Managing Persistent Conflict through a Violent Dialogue of Military Operations,” *Prism* 5, no. 3 (2015): 69.

⁴⁹ Galula, 64-65.

groups, helping to maintain national or regional stability.⁵⁰ Deterrence of unconventional adversaries can also include indirect threats of sanctions or imprisonment to prevent third party, or state sponsors, from providing assistance.⁵¹

The interdiction of unconventional forces and opposition groups through direct action not only deters future unconventional actions, but when it is accompanied with IO, it allows for the building of support or will of the people for the government. Building the will of the people deters future unconventional war by denying the objectives of, and benefits from, unconventional and information shaping operations. Any outside support to opposition can be halted or denied through the buildup or reinforcement of positive government sentiment of the people, and addressing conditions in the population that encourage an insurgency.⁵² Disrupting the adversary sources of support, dissuading recruits, and defense of high-value assets are denial measures that can be put in place to deter a non-state actor as well as unconventional forces.⁵³ Targeted IO in conjunction with positive relationships between friendly forces and the people builds and reinforces the national resiliency necessary to resist ambiguous threats and influence. This military presence alongside IO can build reliance and trust between the populace and the military, which in turn generates a will to resist adversarial unconventional forces and therefore prevent or deter them from entering.

It is from among these concepts that this monograph recommends positioning of forces, limited conflict, and operations to build will or partner resiliency in order to deny the unconventional threat of the human domain thus deterring the adversary unconventional warfare.

⁵⁰ Joint Publication (JP) 3-22, *Foreign Internal Defense* (Washington, DC: Government Printing Office, 2010), I-4, I-14 – I-17.

⁵¹ Knopf, 10, 25.

⁵² Galula, 64-65.

⁵³ Trexel, 208.

A Shape-Clear-Hold-Build-Transition Framework of Deterrence

This monograph seeks to identify an operational approach to deter an unconventional threat using the concept of deterrence by denial and coercion. Denying the enemy their objectives and starting proactive limited conflicts—rather than retaliatory conflicts—persuades the opponent not to initiate unconventional operations. The use of conditional major conventional threats as part of deterrence is unnecessary, as this monograph argues that deterrence in the proactive and coercive form of shaping denies objectives rather than dissuades the seeking of them.

As noted above, an adversary uses UW in their shaping operations in an attempt to undermine conventional deterrence and create conditions that legitimize later conventional actions. In order to do this, first they either create or align with a disenfranchised group or population with similar or tangential values in their target location. Then, they begin an insurgency or resistance movement in order to fracture state control, either to achieve their UW objectives or justify their conventional actions. Since, prior to conventional conflict, the adversary seeks to incite an insurgency that friendly forces wish to stop and ideally deny, COIN doctrine provides a useful framework to approach the deterrence of UW as a shaping operation.

This monograph proposes an application of the COIN framework that will deny adversary UW physical objectives and target populations by maintaining a PN's control over and support from the population with a competitive advantage to the populace that exceeds any adversary's value propositions. The COIN approach of "shape, clear, hold, build, and transition" (SCHBT) provides a framework for deterrence of UW that encompasses many current shaping and deterrence efforts of conventional forces, as well as providing an overarching UW deterrence methodology, which does not currently exist in US military doctrine. Key points of effective SCHBT that enable it as a viable framework for deterrence of UW are:

- Safeguards the population and infrastructure [from unconventional forces]
- Provides opportunity for host nation police and other institutions and agencies to gain and maintain rule of law [where it could be challenged by UW]
- Provides essential services and addresses the root causes of an insurgency [before it starts]
- Denies [UW] active and passive support
- Gains the support of the populace [through the increased will of the people increasing the resiliency of the nation]⁵⁴

The framework deters via denial by securing potential UW objectives. This is done by building a strong relationship that creates a superior value between friendly, legitimate forces and the people, while limiting the relationship between adversarial forces and the people. It acknowledges that opposition to the existing government cannot be eliminated or removed in its entirety, especially without just cause, and therefore the PN must hold and build the will within the population by addressing root problems that create the potential for support of UW operations. Like COIN operations post-conflict, it must be a whole-of-government approach. Application of this framework does not assume that military-to-military cooperation and conventional deterrence alone will prevent an adversary from undermining or sidestepping those efforts, and therefore there still may be a need to deny the unconventional objective of the PN populace.

US Army doctrine on COIN, presented in FM 3-24, *Insurgencies and Countering Insurgencies*, is largely, but not exclusively, written with failing nations, nations in post-conflict situations, or PNs with ungoverned spaces in mind. When the environmental context of shaping activities (pre-insurgency) and root causes are similar to that in COIN, the framework becomes a viable option for application to deter UW. Applying the COIN framework to vulnerable populations and areas within partner nations pre-conflict differs from traditional COIN in that traditional COIN

⁵⁴ Joint Publication (JP) 3-24, *Counterinsurgency* (Washington, DC: Government Printing Office, 2013), V-16.

is applied against an active insurgency, and pre-insurgency application intends to deny the adversary unconventional forces from starting an insurgency. In traditional COIN situations, the counterinsurgent attempts to build HN capacity at the expense of an active insurgency over time, but in deterring UW, the PN seeks to maintain and build capacity, resiliency, and will at the expense of potential or future support for an opposition group over time.

Shaping operations, the first step of SCHBT, involve identifying root causes of potential insurgency, and isolating opposition groups from the population and UW support through IO.⁵⁵ Information operations initiated in this phase are aimed at opposition groups, the population at large, and the adversary last throughout. Targeted IO at the population and opposition groups reinforce PN security and capability against adversary meddling, and communicates consequences for both internal and external interference to national security. These operations legitimate any actions taken in the following phases, and lay the groundwork for the PN value propositions to garner support from the populace, be it functional such as security, monetary, or psychological such as national will. Although targeting the PN's population, IO also communicates consequences to would be adversaries. Additionally, this shaping phase attempts to identify root problems that may lead to PN opposition growth and support of adversarial UW operations. Infiltration of targeted groups begins in this phase in order to understand their views, and level of maturity in capabilities and base of support. The earlier in the creation of an opposition group infiltration occurs the easier it is, and the easier it becomes to stall or dissolve it from the inside.⁵⁶ Other information to be gathered either from infiltration or observation is the communication networks opposition groups utilize to mobilize or seek UW support.⁵⁷ This allows for effective monitoring of any attempt to

⁵⁵ Field Manual (FM) 3-24, *Insurgencies and Countering Insurgencies* (Washington, DC: Government Printing Office, 2014), 9-5.

⁵⁶ Galula, 68.

⁵⁷ Misagh Parsa, *States, Ideologies, and Social Revolutions* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2000), 22.

mobilize and/or exploit the group by an adversary, as well as a method to measure the receipt and effectiveness of IO. In the end, this phase lays the ground work for legitimate actions against opposition and UW in the clear phase.

For the clear phase, the second step in SCHBT, the term “clear” signifies the desired effect of eliminating opposition within a vulnerable or dangerous population, or UW forces from areas of national interest. This phase denies UW objectives within the PN populace before opposition groups gain outside support by interdicting such groups, and making further unrest within the population untenable. This phase may not be necessary if no such threat or vulnerability exists, but an organization in the PN manipulated by or possessing the potential for influence by UW must be confronted or the PN risks allowing adversary UW a foothold in the human domain.

Limited conflict in this phase takes the form of military or policing actions internal to the PN against organizations or populations that publicly act against the state in order to fracture it or seek adversary support. US military activities may include FID, security cooperation, IO, or intelligence support. Clearly communicated legal justification of any arrests or strikes, established by IO efforts, stunt the growth of opposition and deny further exploitation of perceived PN injustice within the population by UW.⁵⁸ Similarly, avoiding indiscriminate violence by PN forces prevents opposition growth and UW support.⁵⁹ Intelligence efforts should focus on clear identification of adversarial unconventional forces, allowing for strikes against such forces, and preventing adversary influence and support with minimal impact to the population. It is impossible for a PN to clear all opposition that UW may exploit, but UW can be deterred if: the impression is conveyed that action against or arrest of local groups is a serious possibility; successfully prosecuted cases have clear standards of collusion with adversary states; an acceptable level of support (technical,

⁵⁸ Galula, 65.

⁵⁹ Kalyvas, 144.

financial, or military) from the adversary is evident; and there are effective publicity and IO campaigns.⁶⁰

Adversarial UW cannot be successful if the OE is too dangerous, therefore, in step three, the hold phase, military and resources are positioned to protect key terrain and populations to deny UW objectives. The intent of this phase is to maintain the status quo, raise the level of control and influence of the PN over the vulnerable population in order to increase the level of civil participation with the PN and not UW efforts.⁶¹ Hold allows for the positioning of resources utilized in the build phase. Resources include time, troops, money, development programs, and other enablers, based on the capacity of the population, that address the root causes of potential insurgencies, providing a superior value resulting in a preference for the PN among the population, and builds a competitive advantage over the adversary. Allocation of limited resources and military personnel to establish the competitive advantage and permanent control becomes the difficulty in this phase.⁶² Unlike COIN doctrine which recommends waiting to initiate the clear phase until the resources for the hold phase are available, in UW deterrence, control of the population by the PN is maintained through clearance, and so this phase must be executed as soon as legally possible.⁶³

A critical resource for the simultaneous success of steps 2 and 3, clear and hold, is the forward positioning of forces. In shaping activities, having forces forward allows for PN forces to not only build partner military relationships, but to hold the human domain against an unconventional threat.⁶⁴ Positioning forces and resources, as a credible threat of conventional action, deters the conventional threat, but does not necessarily deter the commitment of an unconventional force. Unconventional deterrence is achieved when the target population and

⁶⁰ Freedman, *Deterrence*, 66; Galula, 39.

⁶¹ Kalyvas, 111.

⁶² Ibid., 141.

⁶³ FM 3-24, 9-7.

⁶⁴ JP 3-0, VI-4.

adversary are convinced that their behavior is monitored and sanctioned with reasonable accuracy.⁶⁵ Positioning of resources and forces following the clear phase—or in the absence of the clear phase if no illegal opposition or adversarial UW is present in the OE—achieves that deterrence. After identifying and or removing the unconventional threat, forces fill the power void in the human domain with their forward presence among the target population. Through positive interaction, friendly forces establish a firm hold of credibility and trust with the population.

In deterring UW, step 4, the build phase, occurs simultaneously with the hold phase, as both utilize the same resources. These resources increase popular will for PN through troop and police partnerships among the people. Similar to COIN, “the phase comprises carrying out programs designed to remove the conditions that allow an insurgency to exist, specifically addressing the root causes, tying inhabitants to the host-nation security institutions, governing and rule of law, and strengthening the HNs ability to provide legitimate and effective governance.”⁶⁶ Deterrence of UW differs from COIN because, in deterrence, it is easier to build the capabilities that increases the capacity of the PN and isolate opposition groups from the population and adversary. The difficulty in COIN lies in the fact that an insurgent in the PN, backed by UW forces, has already gained control of the population.⁶⁷ In the build phase, committing resources in theater to build state capacity, and address state issues that allow UW to persist in partner nations, helps to prevent crises which would require the commitment of even more assets and resources upon creation of crisis.⁶⁸

Another element of the contemporary understanding of deterrence is information operations targeted at the adversary. Such targeted IO is necessary to communicate your credible capability to

⁶⁵ Kalyvas, 190.

⁶⁶ FM 3-24, 9-8.

⁶⁷ Galula, 68-69.

⁶⁸ Stephen Watts et al., *Countering Others' Insurgencies: Understanding US Small-Footprint Interventions in Local Context* (Santa Monica, CA: RAND, 2014), 180-82, 193.

the adversary for conventional deterrence, but it too may serve to shape the environment by deterring the unconventional threat when focused on the vulnerable population. Freedman argues, “conventional deterrence requires a demonstration of capability, while nuclear deterrence is more a ‘matter of will’.”⁶⁹ So, too, UW deterrence is a matter of will, but not will to commit, rather the will to resist outside adversarial UW influence. This is deterrence by denying objectives in the human domain because the popular will, in conjunction with passive defenses, demonstrate that any UW approach is apt to fail. Targeted information operations to the population that address the initial issues that lead to polarization contribute to the building of this popular will, and can therefore achieve the ultimate deterrence by denying the human domain to the unconventional forces. The intent of hold and build in deterring UW is to create a superior psychological value proposition to the domestic population, one that elicits commitment to decisions that are consistent with the PN values and national security. IO that capitalizes on family, ethnicity, religion, and nation may be best suited to achieve such an effort.⁷⁰ When the PN population has a strong will to resist, and there is a minimal probability of UW occurring, the build phase is complete and deterrence successful.

The final step, transition, occurs not only at the end of the framework but in between each phase. Transitions within the framework occur primarily to and from the clear phase and are largely dependent on conditions. If using US military assets, as the PN builds resource capability or increases their capacity in areas of US military support, transition to PN entities occurs. However, transitioning UW deterrence efforts does not necessarily mean US forces can or should withdraw; if a conventional threat remains and requires conventional deterrence, forces may simply shift focus. The decisions of the adversary will determine when deterrence of UW is complete, and reflected in their foreign policy or changes to their conventional force positioning.

⁶⁹ Freedman, *Deterrence*, 39.

⁷⁰ James G. March and Chip Heath, *A Primer on Decision Making: How Decisions Happen* (New York: Free Press, 1994), 264, 269.

In sum, to deter UW in a PN when shaping an OE, the SCHBT framework provides a valid method to understand and synchronize resources and efforts. By positioning forces and resources forward and conducting limited operations when necessary, individual will builds among the population, resulting in national resiliency against UW. When this happens, an adversarial leader will not undertake an unconventional approach, and will look to shape in other ways, not at all, or be forced to commit to conventional conflict.

Russia and Eastern Europe

A study of the contemporary Eastern European situation shows that an application of SCHBT provides a framework for better understanding US efforts regarding deterrence of UW. It will show how an application of limited conflict and strike operations, positioning of resources, and IO to build will, can shape the environment and deter UW by denying its objectives. In Eastern Europe, the principal threats of unconventional operations against national interests in the current operational environment come from Russia. The ongoing situation offers a recent lesson in UW and conditions for deterrence of UW. This section reviews Russian concepts and actions, strategic and operational needs, and methods and doctrine. It will then turn to what the US and allies are currently doing in the Baltic States, and identify how using a SCHBT framework can help to better understand these current actions as efforts to deter UW. This case study provides an understanding of the contemporary challenges regarding UW deterrence, and will uncover gaps and opportunities for building popular will, positioning of forces and resources, and possibly limited.

Russian Policy, Strategy, and Operational Approach to Unconventional Warfare

Russia looks to extend its power and gain international recognition as a global leader in the face of what it sees as an aggressive Western world order in decline. Using unconventional warfare to create instability and a narrative of protecting ethnic Russians abroad, Russia seeks to expand its

control one area at a time by undermining conventional NATO deterrence and protective measures. The actions taken in Crimea and Eastern Ukraine serve as an example of Russia's unconventional approach and manipulation of the Human Domain.

Russia's foreign policy goals are to overturn the pro-West world order, provide national security, and gain recognition as a global great power. In his address at the 53rd Munich Security Conference in February 2017, Russia's Foreign Minister, Sergey Lavrov stated, "the post-Cold War era has come to an end," and it is time for "a post-West world order."⁷¹ He directly called for the world to recognize the growing irrelevance of institutions established by the United States and the West, and their inability to adapt to the emerging multipolar world, and supported this claim by citing the continued expansion of NATO and its failure to adapt with the world by remaining a Cold War institution.⁷² In addition to Lavrov's comments, since 2014, Russia's military doctrine has identified the expansion of NATO and its missile defense systems as the leading threat to national security.⁷³ From this point of view, Russia must look to protect itself and national interests against a perceived aggressor. Further, in order for Russia to be acknowledged as a global power, it must shape its immediate neighborhood to ensure security, stability, and influence.⁷⁴ Therefore, Russia seeks to reestablish itself as a regional hegemon as its strategic ends, and to achieve that, it must undermine pro-West sentiment among neighboring states using unconventional means in order to

⁷¹ Russian Federation Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Foreign Minister Sergey Lavrov's Address and Answers to Questions at the 53rd Munich Security Conference, February 18, 2017, accessed March 4, 2017, http://www.mid.ru/en/press_service/minister_speeches/-/asset_publisher/7OvQR5KJWVmR/content/id/2648249.

⁷² Ibid.

⁷³ Polina Sinovets and Bettina Renz, *Russia's 2014 Military Doctrine and Beyond: Threat Perceptions Capabilities and Ambitions* (Rome: NATO Defense College, July 2015), 2-4.

⁷⁴ Vera Zakem, Paul Saunders, and Daniel Antoun, *Mobilizing Compatriots: Russia's Strategy, Tactics, and Influence in the Former Soviet Union* (Arlington, VA: Center for Naval Analyses, November 2015), 13.

circumvent NATO retaliation. To achieve these objectives without provoking major war, Russia relies on a narrative that justifies their actions in peripheral conflicts.

To do this, Russia has developed a way of war that undermines US conventional military advantages, and creates situations where it can argue that it is legally right to intervene. Figure 5 lists Russia's varying approaches, using the elements of national power, along a scale that begins with covert actions to instigate and justify actions, mobilizes partisans, and if necessary, take overt action. By instigating unrest in neighboring pro-Western nations, Russia justifies intervention on the basis of protecting ethnic Russians, providing stability to neighbors, defending "self-determination," and protecting human rights. Protection of Russian compatriots has been a foreign policy objective for decades and securing this population serves as legitimation for Russian aggression because it is morally right.⁷⁵ However, in addition to an object for policy, Russia also uses compatriots abroad as a tool to maintain Russian culture in neighboring countries, create schisms in HN control of the population, and to provide intelligence on military, trade, financial and economic policy, and internal politics as an unconventional force would.⁷⁶ Russia uses the concept of self-determination and the protection of humanitarian rights to also justify intervention, and uses the NATO intervention in Kosovo as a legal precedent.⁷⁷ In these ways, Russia justifies its seizure of Crimea and actions in Eastern Ukraine.

⁷⁵ Ibid., 15, 20.

⁷⁶ Ibid., 18-19.

⁷⁷ Kevin Rousseau, "International Law and Military Strategy: Changes in the Strategic Operating Environment," *Journal of National Security Law and Policy* 9, no. 1 (October 31, 2016): 16, accessed December 19, 2016, <http://jnslp.com/2016/10/31/international-law-military-strategy-changes-strategic-operating-environment/>.

popular support against the legitimate government, much like what happened in Crimea.⁷⁹ Russian unconventional forces used mobs to block and disarm Ukrainian military convoys, and in order to remain ambiguous, imported foreign fighters from Chechnya when the Ukrainian government countered with force.⁸⁰ Only after a new pro-West Ukrainian president was elected and the separatist forces were nearly surrounded did Russia overtly step forward with military and material support.⁸¹ Russia's intervention to prevent the destruction of PN opposition has resulted in what has become known as a "frozen conflict". This is not the first-time Russia has used frozen conflicts to further its strategic aims. Similar previous frozen conflicts in Europe have normalized over time (i.e., Moldova and Georgia), and when "frozen," favor Russia. These frozen conflicts help Russia to achieve national security objectives by extending its control by small regions at a time, and ultimately creating a buffer between its national borders and the West.

The use of Russian unconventional forces follows regular lines of operation once committed; unconventional forces and militias seize key infrastructure such as government buildings and airports for follow on conventional forces that are poised along the border, and mobilize local opposition groups in order to build support and legitimacy. Recent Russian unconventional actions that both preceded and occurred concurrently with armed conflict in Ukraine are not a novel approach to warfare, though the term "hybrid warfare" has been newly coined to describe such an approach. The concept is not new; it is more an adaptation of traditional Russian methods to their contemporary political, economic, informational, and technological changes.⁸² The concept is not limited to Russia, as states seeking to expand their influence or

⁷⁹ Maksymilian Czuperski et al., *Hiding in Plain Sight: Putin's War in Ukraine* (Washington, DC: Atlantic Council, 2015), 4-5.

⁸⁰ "Little Green Men," 59.

⁸¹ Czuperski et al., 4-5.

⁸² Nick Sinclair, "Old Generation Warfare: The Evolution—Not Revolution—of the Russian Way of Warfare," *Military Review* 96, no. 3 (May-June 2016): 8.

borders can be expected to employ a range of coercive activities to advance their national interests through combinations of direct and indirect approaches designed to slow, misdirect, and blunt successful responses by targeted states.⁸³

The motivations and justification of actions are important for legitimation domestically and internationally; protection of compatriots meets the needs of both audiences. This justification was made explicit when, shortly after the annexation of Crimea, Putin announced the Russian protection for all ethnic Russian speaking peoples in the near abroad.⁸⁴ This announcement has alerted the neighboring Baltic States to potential Russian subversion and manipulation of their ethnic Russian population.

Another important aspect of Russian UW is its IO capability. As it has rebuilt its military and influence since the fall of the Soviet Union, Russia has learned through its recent international actions how to best utilize its information operations in modern technology for subversive purposes. Following the Second Chechen War of 1999, Russia recognized the power of the internet and the impact it would have on their traditional information operations. This impact was reinforced in Georgia in 2008, when Russia won militarily but again did not fare well in the information war. This spurred the creation of the Information Troops, dedicated to manage the information war from within the military. The 2011 protests in Moscow provided the opportunity to practice denying social media as a means for organizing resistance, and was a significant time of learning to use online mass communication for the military. By 2014, Russian information campaigns displayed close coordination of messaging with centralized direction along multiple outlets to target

⁸³ *JOE* 2035, 6.

⁸⁴ Moscow Times, "Russia Sees Need to Protect Russian Speakers in NATO Baltic States," *Moscow Times*, September 16, 2014, accessed December 8, 2016, <https://themoscowtimes.com/news/russia-sees-need-to-protect-russian-speakers-in-nato-baltic-states-39450>; Robert Coalson, "Putin Pledges to Protect All Ethnic Russians Anywhere. So, Where Are They?" *Radio Free Europe Radio Liberty*, April 10, 2014, accessed December 8, 2016, <http://www.rferl.org/a/russia-ethnic-russification-baltics-kazakhstan-soviet/25328281.html>.

audiences.⁸⁵ Additionally, the Russian online army has the proven ability to create an illusion of consensus to confuse or gain support among populations.⁸⁶ This digital IO capability integrated with UW troops enables population manipulation and the ability to shape an environment to support Russian intervention.

Russia uses information and influence operations to mobilize target populations, specifically those of Russian ethnicity. Russia overtly engages these populations through institutions such as the Government Commission of the Affairs of Compatriots Abroad, or *Rossotrudnichestvo*, the Federal Agency for Commonwealth of Independent States Affairs, Compatriots Living Abroad, and International Humanitarian Cooperation. More indirectly, information operations waged through social media or government news agencies such as Russia Today also target Russian populations outside the nation. Additionally, the Russian Orthodox Church maintains close ties with compatriots abroad, and through government associations or public declarations of faith by Russian leaders such as Vladimir Putin, offers another medium by which to communicate with them. Finally, Russia manipulates target populations in neighboring states when it uses its economic power over those states to maintain stability or create chaos as needed.⁸⁷

An Analysis of the Baltic Operational Environment

Ukraine offers insight into how Russia seeks to use UW. The next likely targets for Russian UW are the Baltic States. The Baltic nations of Estonia, Latvia, and Lithuania make up NATO's northeastern front. Their history as former states in the USSR, close economic ties, and large ethnic Russian population pose a vulnerability to UW. As members of NATO, and in the wake of Russian

⁸⁵ Giles, 27-30.

⁸⁶ Ibid., 36.

⁸⁷ Zakem, Saunders, and Antoun, 37-47.

involvement in Ukraine, the United States currently conducts conventional deterrence and reassurance operations in the region.

Each of the Baltic States has a Russian minority concentrated in specific regions, as well as some that live in their major cities. Estonia has a large population of ethnic Russians at about 24.8 percent of the total population.⁸⁸ The eastern counties on the border with Russia, which includes the city of Narva, are roughly 82 percent ethnic Russian.⁸⁹ Although ethnic tensions have eased in the past decade, high unemployment in this area, if left unaddressed by the Estonian government, may allow Russian UW an opportunity.⁹⁰ Similarly, 26.2 percent of the population in Latvia is ethnic Russian; outside of the capital, Riga (38.6 percent ethnic Russian), the majority live along the eastern border with Russia, and the largest urban population concentration is in Daugavpils at 50.4 percent.⁹¹ Here ethnic Russians feel discriminated against by the Latvian government's continual denial of citizenship, despite the fact that these ethnic Russians have lived in Latvia the majority of their life.⁹² Latvia has begun to see the beginnings of Russian IO as part of UW approach to fractionalize the government control, via cyber-coercion evident in pro-separatist Facebook pages.⁹³ Finally, Lithuania contains the smallest segment of ethnic Russians in the Baltics at 5.8 percent, but faces a non-state UW threat in the form of organized crime that controls smuggling between

⁸⁸ "The World Factbook, Estonia," *CIA World Factbook*, accessed December 8, 2016, <https://www.cia.gov/library/publications/the-world-factbook/geos/en.html>.

⁸⁹ Narva Department for Development and Economy, *Narva in Figures 2010*, Peetri 3 – 5, 20308 (Narva, Estonia, 2010), 8.

⁹⁰ *Jane's Sentinel Security Assessment – Central Europe and the Baltic States: Estonia* (IHS, May 27, 2016), 6.

⁹¹ "The World Factbook, Latvia," *CIA World Factbook*, accessed December 8, 2016, <https://www.cia.gov/library/publications/the-world-factbook/geos/lg.html>; *Jane's Sentinel Security Assessment – Central Europe and the Baltic States: Latvia* (IHS, June 29, 2016), 28.

⁹² *Jane's Sentinel Security Assessment – Central Europe and the Baltic States: Latvia* (IHS, June 29, 2016), 20.

⁹³ *Ibid.*, 6.

Russia's Kaliningrad enclave and Belarus.⁹⁴ The threats faced by these nations collectively, in terms of vulnerable populations within their states, are similar to those faced by Ukraine, and provide Russian UW access and opportunity.

US and NATO militaries currently conduct activities to deter future Russian aggression in the Baltic States following the situation in Ukraine. These activities primarily focus on the conventional threat but do acknowledge the efforts required to shape the environment against UW. The former US European Command (USEUCOM) Commander, Air Force Gen. Philip M. Breedlove, in his 2016 Posture Statement to the US Congress, identified countering malign Russian influence and aggression as his number one priority.⁹⁵ The Posture Statement discusses USEUCOM efforts to deter conventionally as well as shape the environment. Training Ukrainian National Guard and defense forces, continued execution of the reassurance initiative Operation Atlantic Resolve (OAR), deploying an Armored Brigade Combat Team (ABCT) set of equipment to the eastern border of the European theater, and increasing Army Prepositioned Stocks (APS) are USEUCOM's conventional deterrence efforts.⁹⁶ OAR involves the execution of partnered and allied training and exercises, most notably in Eastern Europe, by US troops based in Europe and the continual rotation of ABCT Regionally Aligned Forces (RAF) to Eastern Europe, and is funded by the European Reassurance Initiative (ERI).⁹⁷ To shape the theater, NATO Article 3 serves as the basis for USEUCOM's security cooperation, and supports allies through "self-help and mutual aid" by enabling capabilities to address a crises before conflict, and USEUCOM conducts strategic messaging to select audiences to counter malign actions and activities.⁹⁸

⁹⁴ "The World Factbook, Lithuania," *CIA World Factbook*, accessed December 8, 2016, <https://www.cia.gov/library/publications/the-world-factbook/geos/lh.html>; *Jane's Sentinel Security Assessment – Central Europe and the Baltic States: Lithuania* (IHS, June 24, 2016), 6-7.

⁹⁵ US European Command, *Posture Statement*, 2016.

⁹⁶ *Ibid.*

⁹⁷ US European Command, "Operation Atlantic Resolve."

⁹⁸ US European Command, *Posture Statement*, 2016.

The National Defense Authorization Act (NDAA) for Fiscal Year (FY) 2017 describes what programs the United States funds for the year, and provides more details of efforts to deter and counter Russia. The actions listed in the posture statement and funded by the ERI will expand in FY17, based on the assumption that the theater is shifting from an assurance posture to deterrence against Russian aggression.⁹⁹ This is in recognition of an increased threat or crisis, and the initiation of focused operational shaping and deterrence in addition to continued theater shaping deterrence activities. Expansion of ERI allows for the placement of an ABCT in Eastern Europe and more APS, increasing conventional readiness of the US military against Russia. Not identified in the posture statement is the use of special operations for partnership activities in central and Eastern Europe, or SOF presence, activities, and training ranges.¹⁰⁰ These special operations most likely support activities directly in line with PN's deterrence of UW. Beginning in FY16, the United States allocates \$28 million per year to pay for the expenses of Eastern European nations to participate in multilateral exercises for the purposes of improving these nations' capacity, capability, and ability to respond to external conventional and unconventional threats.¹⁰¹ Another security cooperation program is the State Partnership Program, in which US National Guard units interact with both civil and defense personnel of a partner nation.¹⁰²

The Baltic nations' security against an unconventional threat is tenuous. Their vulnerable populations, largely along their borders with Russia, present opportunities for unconventional force movements into and out of the country as well as a population to hide among. Combined with IO, any UW efforts will exploit existing perceived discriminations and injustices. To counter this, the

⁹⁹ House Armed Services Committee, *The National Defense Authorization Act (NDAA) for Fiscal Year 2017 Summary*, 114th Cong., 2016, HR 4909, 14.

¹⁰⁰ Ibid.

¹⁰¹ "Security Cooperation Programs through Fiscal Year 2016," Defense Security Cooperation Agency, accessed December 19, 2016, 153, http://www.disam.dsca.mil/documents/pubs/security_cooperation_programs_160127.pdf.

¹⁰² Ibid., 172.

United States conducts military operations to shape the environment through military interactions with the people.

Application of the SCHBT Framework

US operations in Eastern Europe aim to deter Russia from further aggression. Applying the SCHBT framework to this area of operations explains the actions of the US military in terms of deterring Russian UW in the Baltic States, and also identifies strengths and opportunities to improve efforts to deter UW. Due to initiation of conventional conflict prior to US and NATO military support in Ukraine, the SCHBT framework for the purposes of deterring UW will not be applied to Ukraine, but instead to the Baltic States where the threat exists but has not crossed the conventional threshold.

In the shape phase, efforts focus on laying the groundwork for future legitimate overt actions, and identifying the potential for future insurgency within the PN population. These efforts include identifying internal opposition (infiltrating if possible) and directing communications to that group as well as to the general population and Russia. IO campaigns directed internally to opposition groups within the Baltic nations has not been researched, but it can be assumed that normal policing provides the consequences of interference in national security. The partnerships and military operations intended to deter Russian conventional conflict communicates a strategic message to the general population as well as Russia, one that reinforces PN military security and alliances and therefore the population's trust in the nation. These actions encourage Russian UW and IO in an attempt to fracture the alliance and the Baltic nations' internal security, but requires more time to counter the allied military presence. Identifying and monitoring the communication of opposition groups, such as those identified in Latvia on social media, allows the Baltic nations to monitor, subvert, contain, and potentially act on these groups. Additional strategic messages to Russia intended to deter conventional conflict include Estonia's district patrol competitions, intended to build and train a resistance force to occupation, communicates national will that doubly

deters UW.¹⁰³ Presenting a future unconventional threat to a possible conventional attack promises a long and expensive struggle, and also unifies a population against UW.

Another effort of the shape phase is identifying root causes of existing or possible future opposition for the framework to address. Root problems identified in each of the Baltic nations differ from one to the next, but each contain a population vulnerable to UW, primarily the ethnic Russians and their legal rights. Estonia's concentration of ethnic Russians in the east and loss of jobs in that area allows the potential for inciting the population by UW agents already acting in the area.¹⁰⁴ Although considered well integrated into the society, the 300,000 Russian speaking people in Latvia are considered non-citizens and denied voting rights, and Russian IO is expected to support Russian UW agents on the ground in combination with cyber-attacks and conventional military intimidation to create civil unrest.¹⁰⁵ However as a whole, the ethnic Russians in Estonia and Latvia recognize the superior monetary value of each Baltic State over Russia and currently do not support separatist movements. Yet, fear producing factors such as the geographic isolation of this minority group combined with the political imbalance and economic woes can encourage such populations to rebel even if they do not necessarily have aggressive aims.¹⁰⁶ In Lithuania, the root problem stems from organized crime which the local law enforcement cracked down on in recent years, forcing it to operate out of Kaliningrad or Belarus.¹⁰⁷ Although not currently an issue that creates large insurgent or separatist movements, these criminal elements provide a non-state proxy upon which to conduct UW. These issues represent the possible root causes for a UW approach to

¹⁰³ Kramer, "Spooked by Russia."

¹⁰⁴ *Jane's Sentinel Security Assessment: Estonia*, 2, 6.

¹⁰⁵ *Jane's Sentinel Security Assessment: Latvia*, 4-5.

¹⁰⁶ Barbara F. Walter, "Introduction," in *Civil Wars, Insecurity, and Intervention*, ed. Barbara F. Walter and Jack Snyder (New York: Columbia University Press, 1999), 4.

¹⁰⁷ *Jane's Sentinel Security Assessment – Central Europe and the Baltic States: Lithuania* (IHS, June 24, 2016), 6.

exploit in order to fracture each states' security psychological value proposition to the target population and to build discontent or insurgency until Russian intervention is justified.

Eliminating illegal or dangerous opposition within a population, or identified unconventional force make up the activities within the clear phase by denying UW objectives and means. Accomplished through normal policing operations among each of the Baltic nations, no current public US military actions support or execute such activities. The US military cannot partner with PN police except under emergency conditions by special authority under Title XXII, requiring presidential authority.¹⁰⁸ However, USEUCOM can work through its Joint Interagency Coordination Group (JIACG) to coordinate and synchronize police mentorship and partnership programs of the US Department of State with the current military deterrence operations in the Baltic nations for the purposes of deterring UW. Additionally, US security cooperation operations such as the National Guard's State Partnership Program provides soldiers that have civilian experience at law enforcement, law, medical or other critical fields to PN militaries and civilians. Lithuania's crackdown on organized crime forcing it outside of the country is an example of clearing internal to a PN in UW deterrence.

In the hold phase, military and resources are positioned to protect key terrain and populations, denying UW objectives. The forward positioning of US forces to Eastern Europe in OAR, increasing the APS, and continually rotating an ABCT into Europe intended to deter Russia conventionally, also serve to enable local militaries to deter UW. With the US military bolstering Baltic nations' conventional deterrence, each nation now has freedom and opportunity to use their military to increase its interaction with their population. ERI funding supports increasing the Baltic nations' security and their capacity to position and interact with the US military.¹⁰⁹ Intended to

¹⁰⁸ "Security Cooperation Programs Through Fiscal Year 2016," 24.

¹⁰⁹ Ibid., 53.

increase military capacity, it also enables the Baltic nations' military to deter UW by increasing their movement, presence, and interaction among their population.

In the build phase, each state builds popular will internally by maintaining or presenting a superior value proposition among the three lines of effort, functionality, monetarily, and psychologically. Externally, the US military actions in Eastern Europe currently build goodwill between the states and reinforce the trust in the alliance. Enabled by the US military through conventional military resources and additional enablers, the value proposition lines of effort discussed above builds the internal popular will internal to each Baltic State. The Baltic nations currently possess a superior monetary value to the overall domestic population, as the standard of living is higher than what Russia offers. For example, although ethnic Russians in Narva, Estonia, may have legal and other discriminatory grievances against Estonia, they have a higher standard of living than Russians on the other side of the border, and do not want a change in their economic living and options.¹¹⁰ Russian IO, and calls to ethnic Russians to identify as citizens, challenges the functional and psychological value among the target population for the PN. US military efforts to demonstrate resolve within the alliance, such as OAR, aid in maintaining the psychological value of the PN among the population. Internally to the Baltics, Estonia's wilderness survival and resistance training and Lithuania's growing militias symbolize a strong and growing psychological value among the population.¹¹¹ In order to increase the psychological value among the ethnic Russians in Estonia, the Estonian government has undertaken efforts to integrate the ethnic Russians residing in the east to the rest of Estonia and to overcome the mental barriers held by each ethnicity.¹¹² For

¹¹⁰ Paul Goble, "Beyond Two Percent: How Estonia is Strengthening Its Security and NATO's," *Eurasia Daily Monitor* 14, no. 21 (February 21, 2017), accessed March 9, 2017, <https://jamestown.org/program/beyond-two-percent-estonia-strengthening-security-natos/>.

¹¹¹ Paul Goble, "Lithuanian Popular Militia Expands to Defend Against Russian Threat," *Eurasia Daily Monitor* 14, no. 30 (March 7, 2017), accessed March 9, 2017, <https://jamestown.org/program/lithuanian-popular-militia-expands-defend-russian-threat/>; Kramer, "Spooked by Russia."

¹¹² Goble, "Beyond Two Percent."

Estonia and Latvia, the functional value proposition for the ethnic Russians remains at risk as perceived discrimination through withholding of voting rights persists in combination with unemployment among that population. Therefore, this is a critical area to address in UW deterrence, as a perceived imbalance among any of the value propositions—monetary, psychological, or functional—left unattended allows for easy manipulation by Russian IO and UW agents.

Transitions regarding the situation in the Baltics are internal to US military rotations and the conventional deterrence efforts. At this time no transitions need occur between the United States and the Baltic nations regarding capabilities required to deter UW.

The conventional actions of the US military and Baltic nations display a readiness to deter the conventional threat which enables deterrence of the unconventional threat, but there are many areas for improvement regarding deterrence of UW. For instance, there is a lack of IO that directly addresses Russian UW and the consequences to any opposition group identified as working with UW forces. All US assistance and IO messaging that directly address UW must be made through or by the Baltic nation in order to reduce Russian ability to counter US involvement in these areas. This IO, in combination with a legal framework for the Baltic States to act on such groups or perceived Russian meddling, needs further attention. Although police or national investigations into such opposition groups supported by Russian UW would not be made public until after completion, efforts in these areas can be bolstered by whole of government support from the United States with security assistance programs. US military support of Baltic nations in clearing operations should be based within FID direct and indirect support operations and enabled through cyber, IO, and intelligence. Supporting Baltic nations with enablers such as legal prosecution and intelligence gathering on Russian UW agents, or opposition groups and their exposure in the news deters the population from engaging in further UW actions. ERI verbiage is limited in that it seeks to build partner capacity to defend itself in response to crisis in the region, but not partner capacity to

prosecute internal security actions to deny UW objectives, opposition groups and infrastructure, that ultimately deter UW.¹¹³

Detering UW in our Baltic partner nations requires a whole-of-government approach to address root causes of possible opposition, most likely to stem from ethnic Russians' legal status and treatment. Building popular will, is the largest perceived gap in the current US military efforts to the Baltic nations. The US military can only assist, but building will must be accomplished within the population through direct Baltic efforts. The root causes of discontent among the vulnerable population to UW must also be addressed. For Estonia, that is the perceived ethnic discrimination, for Latvia it is ethnic legal rights, and Lithuania it is smuggling and non-state UW. Capitalizing on IO internal in each nation by broadcasting the corrections of the perceived wrongs among these populations should sway the sentiment for each population's values in favor of the PN over Russia. Once the will to resist Russia's competing IO efforts is bolstered, the threat of UW in the Baltic States will be deterred.

Conclusion and Recommendations

The unconventional activities of peer nuclear states, such as Russia, operating within third-party partner nations, grants Russia ambiguity and legitimacy for escalation to conventional conflict or direct intervention. Russia's shaping of the operational environment in this manner can be deterred by US shaping activities within the human domain. The SCHBT framework presents a better understanding of the factors that enable UW and an operational approach to deterring UW that precedes conventional conflict. Using the framework of SCHBT in the US military's theater shaping operations will allow the US to coerce and influence the internal population and deny the adversary's UW objectives.

¹¹³ US European Command, "Operation Atlantic Resolve," 2.

Using the SCHBT framework offers many benefits for operational planning and advantages for deterring UW. This framework provides a way to synchronize subordinate actions, prioritize efforts, allocate resources, and direct specific effects to achieve the endstate of UW deterrence.¹¹⁴ Applying the framework reduces or denies the population to adversary unconventional forces for the purposes of creating an insurgency or opposition that would fracture alliances or PN control. This approach is legitimate on the world stage, because the PN control is not in question and thus operations are largely internal policing enabled by United States resources. Internal to the PN, using the SCHBT framework stops or limits criticism of the PN of ethnic or religious bias or neglect to certain populations because resources will be focused on those vulnerable populations. Lastly, this framework helps to maintain United States and NATO national security interests by deterring potential adversarial UW operations.

The SCHBT framework also has many disadvantages and points that can be exploited by the adversary. This approach relies heavily on intelligence and special operations forces and capabilities. In the contemporary Baltic environment, three states would require a spread of limited assets. The adversary or internal opposition groups would counter with accusations of spying on one's own people and thus shaping the national narrative is important. As described above, even successful deterrence wouldn't be able to legally clear all opposition or potential opposition population groups that UW forces could exploit, but that is why the hold and build portions of the framework are critical. Additionally, it may be difficult to focus efforts on targeting vulnerable populations when those populations are typically not consolidated, but dispersed among the entire nation. This dispersion may require more resources. Most critically, this framework could be viewed as discriminatory, thus promoting or inviting adversarial UW forces to create fractures in

¹¹⁴ FM 3-24, 9-3.

the PN capacity to control the environment, and is again why shaping and controlling the narrative is critical.

In order to deter UW in future OEs, this monograph recommends adopting a SCHBT framework, with a focus on targeted IO on the external threat and to build the national will among the internal population, limited conflict or strikes, and forward positioning of forces and resources in order to enable the partnered nation to accomplish such actions and IO. Internal IO is not limited to propaganda, but includes the display of consequences, legal and lethal, of opposition to the PN, and enables the building of will to refuse future UW attempts. Limited conflict includes a range of policing actions and border enforcement actions executed by the PN, which the US military can support through FID, cyber, and intelligence and surveillance. To support these actions, the US military needs to forward position necessary resources and forces alongside its conventional deterrence forces. These actions prevent opposition groups from having an opportunity to manifest into insurgencies supported by UW, and allow the PN to accommodate their concerns before those concerns are exploited by adversarial UW forces. Investing in the deterrence of UW may prevent a crisis or fully entrenched insurgency and the future need for costlier conventional response measures.¹¹⁵

Applying this approach in addition to the conventional efforts within Eastern Europe and specifically the Baltic nations, provides a framework to deter any Russian UW attempts. Success is unification among the populace and maintenance of the status quo within the region. Success may also be rapid conventional escalation because Russia is denied legitimacy, the US and NATO are equipped to succeed in this type of conflict, and without Russian shaping operations the environment will transition faster to a stable reconstitution of states.

¹¹⁵ Watts et al., 2.

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